

RC445
M4
848P

STATEMENTS

IN REGARD TO THE

TREATMENT OF THE INSANE,

SHOWING

OUR DUTY TO THE POOR AND INSANE, AND THE
ABUSES THEY SUFFER.

BY ELECTA PRESCOTT.

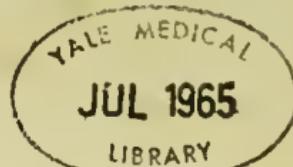
SPRINGFIELD:
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHORESS.
1848.



Clements C. Fry

Book Fund

CLEMENTS C. FRY, M. D.



RC445
M4
848P

TREATMENT OF THE INSANE, &c.

The scenes of horror that I have witnessed of late induce me to present to the public, a detail of the secret evil and cruelties existing in some of our towns, in this much favored land. And I hope all the friends of the human family in every town will search and see if these things are so with themselves. My object is to remind my dear fellow travelers to eternity, of the great and important duty of searching to know their duty towards their neighbor in all things, and urge them to the performance of it, as I find in the bible that this duty is the most important, and the only duty spoken of at the last day. Christ says "search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life." So in everything else that relates to our temporal and eternal interest, we must search to know the truth where it is not obvious. Man is made for labor; in the dawn of his life his limbs are ever in motion; his creation and surrounding providence declare to him the purpose of his existence; "day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge." He is like his fellow beings around him; although he may differ in some respects, still, we all need the same kind of enjoyment to make us forever happy, we are all equally dependent upon our Maker; we have much influence one upon another; we are many flowing along the stream of time together, and to injure our neighbor is to injure ourselves; we all need the same protection, the same sympathy; and to promote our neighbor's happiness is to promote our own. In order to do this, we must search our own hearts, to see if we are willing to do right in all things. Let the cross be what it may, our duty begins first with ourselves, then in our family, or with those with whom we are immediately concerned, to set a good example, to take a deep interest in their welfare, watch for their good, bear a part in their suffering, try to reclaim them when they do wrong; next in our

neighborhood do the same as far as we can. We ought to meet together and know each other's affairs as far as it is necessary to promote each other's good; and above all to visit the sick, the poor and needy, the afflicted and helpless. Next in our town, we ought to take a deep interest in our town meetings; if they have good laws, use our influence to have them obeyed; if not, use our influence to effect a change, and ever plead the cause of the poor, and like Job, search out the cause we know not, and break the jaws of the wicked, or in other words, the laws of the wicked. Home work is the foundation of moral good; without this our nation would be like the house built upon the sand. Let us all look then first at home; it is surprising to hear so much said about the heathen, and the slave at the south; but this is all well if we would but just cast the beam out of our own eye first; how much pains we take to get intelligence about the heathen and the slave, and how little we know about our own town; our laws are far better than they are at the South, but how are they obeyed? how are some of our town's poor treated, especially those that are not capable of speaking for themselves. The Almighty has placed but a few of this class in each town, seemingly no more than he has granted means to do every thing for their comfort. Then if we let these suffer, and do not make a thorough investigation to know whether they are well dealt by or not, and try to have them in a place where they can be benefited the most, how can we make such inquiries about the slave, and feel such interest for them, and do no more for two or three in our town? Some don't wish to hear about their own town, but will hear much about the slave. It is quite fashionable to inquire about other nations; and those that give much for their relief, get a name; it is not fashionable to make any investigations in our own town; and another thing, we shall offend our neighbors, and get enemies. We had rather our neighbors would suffer year after year than to get enemies ourselves. If we will not do justice to a few in our midst, how can we induce the south to do justice by millions! In some of our town meetings the most part wish to get the poor kept as cheap as possible; if the overseers of the poor get them boarded for half price, they are pleased. Some say that poor men have to pay taxes, and it comes hard upon them to give a great price for the poor; this is an excuse, for ninepence a year more cannot materially

injure a poor man that is able to pay taxes; if it does he ought to be helped. In some towns the poor are put out in families; the overseers get them kept as cheap as possible. Poor people take them because they are drove for money. It is making a great sacrifice for the sake of getting a little money. If we should take them ourselves we should want a reasonable price, certainly, as much as we board well people for; but some say we are obliged to make sacrifices ourselves; we cannot always get the common price for our goods. No doubt but what it is so, but it is no excuse for the town to take the advantage of the poor, when they are under obligation by the laws of God and man to do justice to the poor. The poor are many times kept by the poor, and many have not convenient places to keep them, and some are abused. The poor that cannot speak for themselves the poor people fight mostly for, for they know that they can abuse them out of sight and no one know it. This class I plead mostly for, for I have seen their abuses. In some towns the most part of the selectmen turn a deaf ear to the cries of the poor; if a complaint is brought, they make but little investigation, pass over abuses rather than offend their neighbors; they make themselves sleek and honorable, all passes on, still the people put all confidence in them without any investigation themselves; if there is any contradiction between the selectmen and the poor, the poor are put down and the selectmen believed without any search for the truth, and the poor are abused. This I have known to be a fact. More than once I have visited the poor in several towns, been in as a spy to search out their woes in order to ascertain more fully the truth of their case. I knew a man that was reported a raving maniac; he was kept in a cold room, but little fire; I called to see him several times; he was dirty, ragged, and not clothes enough keep him warm; the weather was cold, the windows broken, with boards nailed over them, and places left where the air came in which made the room very uncomfortable. It was a dark and dreary place where he remained for months. The town had the care of him; but since, I have been informed that he is in other hands where he is better dealt by.

I once knew an insane young man, naturally bright and active; he hurt no one, dressed well, and rode about with his father. After the death of his father, he was soon reported a raving maniac; his brother had the care of him,

and the town supported him. A gentleman told me that he called to see this insane man ; his brother was unwilling ; with much entreaty he consented ; he was conducted to a room some distance from the family ; he said the room was not comfortable for a dumb beast ; there was no fire, he was on a sort of a bed covered with rags, his beard very long, his limbs were grown half bent, so that he could not walk, being kept in close confinement so long. This gentlemen said he went to the selectmen, and made a complaint, but I understood that he remained a few years longer as he was, until another man took him to keep. He was then put in a decent bedroom, joining the kitchen ; the lady watched over him, moved him round for exercise, rubbed him, and kept him clean ; the neighbors said there was a great alteration in the poor man ; he grew fleshy, and appeared to like his new mistress much. I called to see him and was very much pleased with his new situation.

I have known sick persons moved from good places, where they were contented, and put in places where they were discontented, and complained that they had not what they needed, for the sake of saving the town a few cents. Is this doing as we would be done by ? There seems to be an abundance in every town to furnish every family, and every person with a comfortable place, and with all they need—the poor that are on the town, and those that are not ; and this I think ought to be done to all except those that will not be made comfortable.

I once undertook in a certain town, to prevail with the people to search out the woes and wants of those in their own town ; I went from house to house. Some would say it did not belong to them, it belongs to the town ; just as if they did not compose a part of the town. If all should say so, I do not know where we could find the town.—Some seemed to think it was not their business to go round watching others. I think it is not our business to watch our neighbors in their own affairs, that has no concern with the poor and helpless, and in things that do not concern us ; but the poor and helpless are entrusted to the care of all that are capable of helping them, even if they are in the hands of their own relations they ought to be watched over. Some of the greatest suffering sometimes, is caused by relations. Job says, “the cause I knew not I searched out, and I broke the jaws of the wicked ;” and we are commanded to visit the sick, and those in prisons ; our Savior says, “when I was in prison ye visited me not.”

If a man should say one of his neighbors had stolen some money from him, and perhaps he might steal from others, would not the whole town be watching? If a man should say that his insane neighbor was abused, who would arise to do anything about it? I fear the most part care more about money than they do about the souls and bodies of their fellow beings. I was once informed by a lady in my native town, that lived some distance from where I resided, that one of her nearest neighbors had the care of a crazy woman, and they abused her shamefully, and that she had seen them abuse her repeatedly. I asked her if she had made it known in her neighborhood; she said no! it would not do, for she should get in a quarrel, or words to this effect. The woman that gave me this intelligence has left this world, and undoubtedly rendered her account to one greater than man.

I was once informed that there was a man in a certain town that applied every year for the insane, the foolish and the helpless, and generally took some of them. Some of their neighbors were dissatisfied with their treatment to the insane, and informed the selectmen; they went to see the family, the family told a fair story, and contradicted the report against them; the selectmen did no more about it. The next year this man had the same chance with the rest to take the poor. The selectmen never summoned them to ascertain the truth about them, nor tried any new measures to improve them. I think the town is under as great an obligation to do all in their power to improve the health and reason of those that are entrusted to their care, as they are to do justice to themselves and families, were they in like circumstances; there is money enough to do it, but many had rather please the covetous, than to please their Maker.

Some of our poorhouses are represented to be like dungeons or jails, without suitable care and attention, but some have good houses for their poor, and the poor appear to be well dealt by. There are a few towns that I think are worthy of praise.

I will now just glance at a few private abuses; suffice it to say that I have seen in these New England States, insane people suffer as much with abuse as is represented about the slave at the south. I have seen some suffer with cold, hunger, the lash of the whip, in dreary, dirty, unpleasant rooms, shut out from all society, nothing to divert their

minds, while under the most severe mental suffering, dragging out a miserable existence. Abuses in private families are concealed sometimes from their neighbors; so I think it of much importance if there is any complaint made, if only by one individual, to have the patient removed to another place, to see if the removal will not effect a change in the patient. A few abuses concealed have been searched out, and found to be the most horrid, and exposed in public print.

Miss Dorothea Dix, of Boston, has devoted her time for a number of years past, to the searching out of these abuses; she has been from town to town in the United States; she has presented a detail of some of the most shocking cruelties, even in this civilized and enlightened Massachusetts. Sometimes abuses the most cruel are perpetrated by the relatives of these unfortunate persons. There are many in our community that have no knowledge of these things; those that have ought to proclaim to others. How easy with a little pains and a little sacrifice each town might provide places for these poor objects, and make them as comfortable as they can be made. How easy they might get a knowledge of their condition, and adopt measures taken in the hospital—which is kind treatment.

Every one that is capable of acting in town meetings should see that there is no one that suffers for want of the necessities of life, that is entrusted to the care of the town. This obligation is founded on the laws of God and are good. The overseers of the poor are to watch over them and see that they are well dealt by. The whole town are responsible, of course they are to watch over the overseers of the poor, to see that they are faithful. The overseers that are honest, humble, and well informed, will choose to be watched over, and have everything investigated that relates to their duty towards others; they will be willing to ask counsel, and willing to receive reproof, whether they need it or not, if it is done in kindness toward them. It is such that ought to rule the town; it is such that ought to rule the nation. The greatest and most talented men are liable to err in things they have not searched into. A child or a fool may teach a great man something; if he is truly great he will receive instruction from any one, and acknowledge his own mistakes if he has any. The learned differ in their opinions as much as the ignorant; so we must all seek a proof for ourselves, and search for the truth in all things

that relates to our duty, where it is not plain, and where we have no proof, leave it as uncertain, and do as near right as possible. Many are ignorant of what they can do, and grow up like uncultivated plants, and are almost useless beings ; the smallest of us can do much if we put forth our energy.

The interest of the people in one town are combined ; and to know each other's feelings, disposition, and earthly prosperity, we should be better qualified to do each other good. It would enhance our happiness, and we should know better how to make allowance for each other, and to do justice to each other. The treatment of the poor, and the places assigned them, and the prices given for their board, I think ought to be known in every family in the town.—The hospitals give their reports, why not a town ; the interest of the poor and helpless, ought to be the interest of all.

I once heard one of the selectmen of a town say, after he had put out the poor at low prices, "I don't see how these poor people can take these paupers at such low prices and live ; but they do, and do well by them." How did he know they did well by them, if he did not know how they could live. I was informed that the selectmen did not see them but once a year, just to make a bargain for another year. I suppose there are some wealthy farmers, that never knew the cost of living, and what the poor suffer ; but if they would obey the laws of the bible they would soon know.

I think in cases of insanity and helplessness, there ought to be particular pains taken for their comfort, and everything done for their improvement ; at a little more cost this might be done. But no, other things must be attended to ; some road must be made, school money must be raised, and if we have any money to spare, we must give it to support the gospel. Is this adding to the public good to neglect our poor at home ? It may increase our popularity, but I think it is injurious to the public good ; justice, reason, and revelation, require us to relieve our present suffering at home first ; the stranger that is with us, ought to be as one born among us. We might supply all our wants at home, and then give more to the heathen and slave than we do. We ought not to think more of other countries than we do of our own. I think I should rather be a slave at the south, than to be kept as some of our poor insane people are kept here, and whipt as some are. I

think I should rather be one year dying with hunger in Ireland, than to be twenty years dying in America with hunger and cold in some lonely cell, with a shattered mind, unable to control my feelings, suffering, as a criminal, under the lash of a whip.

After much light and knowledge respecting the insane, has been diffused among us, such cruelties, we have reason to believe, still exist. Just contrast the kind treatment in our hospitals, with such abuses. I have visited the Hospital in Worcester a number of times, and conversed with the insane; the greater part answered me rationally when I asked them a question; the most of them attend meeting steadily, and behave well: when at meeting they seem to feel a restraint upon them, they are diverted, and a spirit of self respect seems to kindle within their breast; when out of meeting they feel more at liberty, and when there is nothing in particular to take their attention, they are more inclined to give way to their crazy feelings. Some were inclined to do mischief, and would contrive to do it slyly; they would use as much cunning as a rational person; some would swear and use indecent language; some would rather die, seemingly, than not to gratify their feelings. No doubt but the greater part knew they were doing wrong, but their feelings pressed them to do it; no doubt but what they might control their feelings more than they do, if they were so disposed, but their minds are so weak, that they want some inducement to check their feelings; if they should make an effort to overcome their feelings, at times of excitement, without something to draw them mildly from it, it might make the mind still weaker. I have not the least doubt but what the majority of these crazy people have a better knowledge than those that have the care of them, of what they can bear themselves. On this subject they use more reason accordingly than rational people, for they feel the need of it. The whip or harsh treatment might drive them to make an effort to overcome their feelings, but this very effort might weaken their minds and increase their insanity; and in addition to this they might feel degraded and abused, which would prey upon their spirits. I once knew a crazy girl, that was whipped and used with severity in times of her excitement. In this way they made her mind; she seemed to lose all pride and self respect, and has remained a poor maniac for more than thirty years. I think those that are dangerous to be around ought to have tight rooms where they can injure

no one, and where they can be made comfortable and treated kindly, and everything done possible to improve them; they ought to be let out often if it is safe, to take the fresh air. There is an abundance in our country to do all that is necessary for these unfortunates of the human family. I knew one crazy girl that was raving at times; when her crazy fits were off, she offered herself for confinement, no doubt but what she knew it was consistent; but to put on the whip, and show temper towards these sufferers is brutal; they feel it sensibly; it excites their passions, and increases their derangement; they may govern their feelings through fear, but they are tempted to sink down in grief or to harbor spite toward yon. The general remark is, that insane people spite their relations more than they do others; there is now and then one that spites those that treat them kindly, and their best friends, but it is those whose excitement seems to baffle all reason; but the most part, so far as my observation extends, who spite their relatives, spite them for their harsh treatment. Sometimes when a crazy person attempts to strike you, it is necessary to defend yourself, and let him know you are the strongest, if you are, but not show any temper, nor hurt him any more than you can help; if he has any reason he will know you are consistent, and respect you. If it is so hard to govern the passions of those who have strong minds, and are rational and need the mildest word to turn away their wrath, how much less one whose mind is shattered, and the nervous system unstrung! look at the power of kindness in the hospitals; look at the power of kindness in families; I have known a number restored to their reason while living among their relatives. I was informed that it was all owing to kind treatment. I knew a lady in my native town that was crazy for some two or three years; she had a kind husband and an affectionate daughter, who seemed to do all in their power to please her and make her happy as possible; she was dressed well, kept clean, went to meeting, and in times of her excitement they seemed to treat her with the utmost kindness; her reason has returned. The last time I saw her she was rational and had the care of her family. If all crazy people were treated by their relatives in this way, I think the general observation would be, that crazy people love their friends the best.

When visiting the hospital at Worcester, I was informed that there were a few of these insane people that were

but little deranged, and did not know that they were deranged themselves ; they appeared perfectly rational the most part of the time ; such people, and those that think themselves a goose or some other being, their mind becomes a dream, and things appear in an unnatural state, and they are not sensible of their situation ; but the greater part that are insane seem to have a knowledge of their condition ; some will say that they are crazy themselves, and will tell the reason of it, but don't like to hear people say anything about their insanity ; and people ought to be careful of talking about their minds before them.

Some say they have talked before insane people about their insanity, and they don't mind anything about it, for they don't say anything nor look as if they heard it. How do such know what crazy people think ? they know what you say when you speak to them, and do they not understand when you are talking about them ? They may feel so bad that they cannot speak.

I think the most part of insane people are more sensitive when injured than rational people ; they know just as quick when they are imposed upon. It is strange how ignorant a great part of the human family have been for hundreds of years about this most pitiful class of the human race. We have an account of the mad houses in the old country ; the insane were put in prison, in chains and fetters, treated with severity, whipped, and no pains taken to keep them clean, decent or comfortable,—suffering sometimes with cold and hunger ; this was their approved way of discipline. And in this country many have done no better ; and even now after so much light and knowledge upon this subject, some have persisted in the same abuses. I think if any subject on earth ought to be brought into agitation and acted upon it is this.

What a blessed institution is that Hospital in Worcester ; built in a beautiful place, and everything around it pleasant and agreeable to render it delightful, and pleasing to the unfortunate inmates ; how little do we appreciate this great blessing, and how little done to show our thankfulness, and how much greater blessings we might receive if we would but labor in this important cause.

But some find fault with the management of the insane in the Hospital. No doubt but what some of the attendants abuse the patients sometimes, for the depravity of the human heart is the same there as in other places, and the

Doctor's eye cannot be upon the attendants all the time ; but there cannot be that abuse out of sight as there can be in private families. Their laws are good, and their treatment of the insane quite the reverse from the old way of discipline, and the wonderful cures and improvements in this institution surpasses all we have ever heard respecting the insane. But it would be well, I think, for those that have relatives in the hospital, to have some one that is acquainted with their friends entrusted there, to be near the hospital, and to inform the doctor of all the habits and peculiarities of their friends, and to visit them often if it does not hurt them, and inform the attendants respecting them ; for it is impossible for the doctor or attendants to remember the traits of each patient, unless reminded often ; for they have a large number under their charge.

If people in towns where there are insane people would pattern after the laws of this hospital, treat the insane with the same kindness, keep them in places and among people that are most agreeable to them ; take a little pains to divert their minds, and make them as happy as possible, and keep them from the intrusion of children and every other unnecessary excitement, much might be effected. Those that need no medicine, I think are better among their friends, if kindly treated, than they are at the hospital.

When I visited the hospital, there were but two attendants to one hall, and three to others where more attention was required, and twenty patients in a hall. Their halls were neat, warm and comfortable, with ten bed rooms on each side for the patients, a bed-room for each patient ; the patients seemed to be as clean and comfortable as they could be ; but still I do not think the attendants could see to each patient as well as if they had but one to see to. Undoubtedly some did not require much attention ; others did ; in some cases I think they are better with their friends, they can see to their diet, and find out better what suits them ; they have more time to divert them, and walk out with them ; they can tell better when they are regular in their stomachs and systems ; finally, it is much easier to have the care of one than it is to have the care of twenty, and you can do much more for one. If people would learn to take care of deranged persons, there would be no need of sending so many to the hospital, I think. Insane people are as different in many things as rational people ; what suits one will not another always ; what pleases one will

not another; what one can bear another cannot; their themes are different—some take to mischief, others do not. To find out what pleases most and suits them best, requires patience and observation.

They all need suitable exercise and rest; some need more exercise than others, some need more food, some need to eat often, some need to eat between meals, others don't; some stomachs are more delicate than others and require more delicate food; we ought to see that insane people do not go too long without food; wind gets in the stomach and not having food enough for the stomach to feed upon, loses its balance, and the blood presses to the head; we see how very cross and nervous children are when hungry; and to overload the stomach has the same effect;—sweet or greasy victuals I think is hurtful to eat much, unless hard labor or a consumptive constitution requires it. Well people can get along with irregularity better than the sick and insane, but I think it is better for every one to be as regular as possible in their diet.

People that are well, when the stomach is out of order, the constitution soon regulates it again. It is like a mill where there is plenty of water; some little obstruction may clog the wheel, but the pressure of the water sweeps all before it; but where there is but little water and the mill out of order, a very small thing may clog it, and it requires labor and attention to get every part in motion again. So with the sick and insane; it requires constant attention to get every wheel to go right again; the stomach and bowels are the most important part to keep in repair, then every other little wheel must be seen to; it is more important to keep the bowels of an insane person regular, than if he were sane; this ought ever to be done if possible, unless it be one so wasted away that he cannot bear reducing; suitable exercise on the feet and fresh air every day is good where one can bear it; particular care ought to be taken to take off or put on clothes when the weather first changes, to guard against cold and heat; the blood presses to the head sometimes by overdoing, sometimes for want of exercise. I think we ought to to try to be temperate in all things.

Wherever my lot has been cast, I have made it a practice to visit the poor and afflicted, although sometimes it has been a cross. I have found whenever I have applied my hand in the service of my Maker, and prayed for a

heart to go with my services, I think I never failed of my desired object ; my cross has been a pleasure, and my heart has exulted with love and joy while I have borne a part in the sufferings of others.

Some seem to think they must wait for a feeling before they can act in this way ; we may as well expect our corn to grow before we plant it. The Lord has given us a capacity to regulate and govern our passions, and to labor with our hands to support our bodies ; but we are to look to Him for the spirit to bless us when we are laboring with our passions, as we do for rain upon our vegetables when we labor with our hands. We have much to do in this short and uncertain state of trial ; we are commanded to watch and pray always ; we are not only required to be in constant preparation for death, but we are required to be in preparation to meet temptation, and the trials of life. Sometimes temptation comes upon us suddenly and we have a hard combat with ourselves. The temptations of this world are strong and powerful, and to overcome temptation is the greatest victory won. He that overcometh shall inherit all things ; but in the midst of our wars with ourselves and our sufferings here we find that Christ's yoke is easy and his burden light ; he says, " in the world ye have tribulation, but in me ye have peace ; be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world ; we shall reap in due season if we faint not." Then if our hearts are ever so hard, our inclinations ever so averse to that which is good, let us never be discouraged, but war against our feelings, looking to God for help ; and may we ever remember that we are not worthy of his presence ; and let our feelings be what they may, let us ever persevere in doing our duty. Blessed is he that endureth temptation ; he that waiteth on the Lord shall renew his strength. We ought ever to pray for the Holy Spirit, that we may love God with all the heart, soul and strength, and love our neighbors as ourselves ; this is the first and great command ; on this hang all the law and the prophets. Supreme love to God is a gift from God which surpasses all animal love. We may love our Maker and love our neighbor with this animal love, and have animal pity, and become much excited and proclaim our love as did the Jews of old. But he that doeth the will of his Heavenly Father is accepted. With the love of Christ we shall love all even our enemies, we are told, and be willing to bear the cross. This love will triumph beyond the

grave. We are informed when all these passions that are necessary for the body shall cease, these animal passions need much cultivation, but the love of Christ needs none; the Jews of old seem to be wanting in true love to God.

Idolatry and oppression seem to be some of their greatest sins; the greater part were cut off in wrath, we read, but a trembling few remained who hung their harps upon the willows, and wept for Zion.

Narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it;—to these few is my appeal; to those who shun the honors of this world, and are trying to do good to the souls and bodies of their fellow beings. Some seem to think that the care of the body is not of so much consequence as the care of the soul; the body is called the temple of the Holy Ghost. The mind has much bearing upon the body, and the body upon the mind as long as they are connected; one needs the same care as the other. Worldly troubles and worldly cares, the breaking of the commands of God, impairing the mind and body, such as anxiety for the world, overdoing, excess of passion, eating and drinking too much, idleness, and irregular habits. Many undoubtedly go into our meeting houses with their minds so cloyed with these things that they cannot judge of their own feelings; how many errors may be embraced in such a state of mind; if we should study ourselves instead of grasping this world and the pleasures of time, we should be better qualified to know ourselves, and how to make allowance for ourselves if any weakness of mind, or overexcitement of mind should come upon us providentially. We have a great temptation to love the world and its sinful pleasures; there is much pleasure in sin, to say there is none, is false. I know by my own experience. My heart has exulted in pride and vanity, in sinful pleasures; but these pleasures are soon over and leave a void the world cannot fill; these pleasures are not like the pleasures that come from God's right hand, which are joys forevermore. To possess this joy we must forsake the pleasures of sin and live a cross-bearing life. Then instead of exulting in the pleasures of sin, we should rejoice in trying to promote the glory of God and the good of his creatures.—Some do not even think that they are required to live for others as well as to live for themselves, but think this duty devolves only on some great man like Howard, Dwight, and a few others; but we are all equally responsible as far

as our circumstances will admit. Supreme love to God will lead us to this as far as we have a knowledge. We may all do much; those whose duties confine them principally at home, may do much by precept and example; the least may do much; a few words spoken in secret may be the means of building a city. The Lord hath chosen the weak things of this world to confound the wise. Some who are willing to labor in the cause of their redeemer have not a knowledge of what they can do; then let us ever pray that the great God of the whole earth may increase knowledge and bless the means and measures now in operation that are in accordance with his will to promote his own glory and the happiness of the creatures he has made.

Some seem to think that the Lord did not mean as he said when he commanded us to love our neighbor as ourselves, and think it impossible; it is impossible with ourselves alone, but we are first to ask for this gift of love.—All things are possible with God. If the missionaries of the cross can make a sacrifice of all they hold dear in this life, and lay down their lives for Christ and the church; why cannot all possess the same spirit.

In the progress of my life I have traveled as much as my limited means would allow, hoping to receive some instruction from the various conditions of human life. In this way I have had an opportunity of learning some things by observation, some things by the intelligence of others. In the course of events I have sometimes met with unexpected trials and various duties pressing upon me which I once little thought of. The sufferings of others I found to be more frequent and more aggravating than once I could have believed. While looking at some whose mental powers were impaired, suffering with a shattered mind, I have studied the human mind and made an investigation of my own; while having the care of those suffering under bodily disease, I have made an investigation of my own constitution and of the constitution of others; in all cases I have endeavored to gain as much knowledge as possible for my own benefit, and for the benefit of others. While I feel I have come vastly short of what I might have done, through ignorance, I feel a consolation that my motive was to do good, and my success in alleviating suffering has sometimes been beyond my expectations.

When convenient I have journeyed, but for the most

part I have been an occupant of an humble station; sometimes I have had the care of the sick, sometimes the care of the afflicted, and sometimes the insane. Once I took a crazy woman that a certain town had the care of—she had been reported a raving maniac many years; had always been very poor in flesh and ragged. I was informed that she tore her clothes off and could not be kept decent, and those who had the care of her were obliged to use severe government at times, and sometimes punish her to make her mind. When I took her she left two cages; one so small that she could not stand up in it, where she sat in the daytime for hours, the other she slept in at night, when they thought it necessary to confine her. The selectmen and some of their neighbors approved of their management. After I took her I never found the need of a cage; she and I roomed together alone over five years; during that time she went to meeting, and most of the Sabbaths behaved well. I never knew a cross word to do her any good. She was mischievous; by diverting her mind, in the course of five years she seemed to forget much of her mischief. She grew healthy and fleshy while with me. I could keep her clean and decent. She never tore her clothing off while with me, but I found it required more pains, patience and attention to do justice to such a person than I apprehended. I kept her in the town of Sunderland four years and six months. The people of Sunderland seemed to take a deep interest in her welfare; they clothed her in part one year, and gave us many presents which did us much good. I trust I shall ever remember their kindness with gratitude, and hope the great Giver of every blessing will bless them, not only for their kindness to the poor insane woman, but for their kindness to their own town's poor. Three families that I lived in the house with gave me certificates of her improvement while with me, and the great change in her condition from what it had been reported to be for a number of years in her native town before I took her. I carried their certificates to her native town. I think it not proper for any one to expose the name of any person that suffers with abuse, or the name of the town where they belong, except in their own town, unless an appeal is made to the Legislature, or to the civil law. In Miss Dix's case I think it was necessary to expose both the name and place.

God hath made of one blood all nations of men that

dwell on the face of the earth. Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us? The rich and the poor meet together, and the Lord is the maker of them all. He fashioneth their hearts alike. The Almighty excepteth not the persons of princes nor regardeth the rich more than the poor, for they are all the work of his hand. There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon him.

If thou forbear to deliver those that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest behold we knew it not, doth not he that pondereth the heart consider? The righteous considereth the cares of the poor, but the wicked regardeth not to know it.

Remember those in bonds as bound with them, and those who suffer adversity as being yourselves also in the body. He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker, but he that honoreth him hath mercy on him. He that considereth the poor the Lord shall deliver him in time of trouble; the liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered himself; he that hath a bountiful eye shalt be blessed, for he giveth of his bread to the poor. Thou shalt surely give him and thy heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him, because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works. It is He that giveth the power to get wealth; the Lord maketh poor and maketh rich. The poor shall never cease out of the land; therefore I command thee, saying, thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy poor brother, to thy poor and to thy needy in thy land. The poor ye have always with you; whenever ye will, ye can do them good. To do good and communicate, forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Remember the words of our Lord Jesus how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive; choose them that are rich in this world, that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate. He that seeth his brother have need and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God with him.

To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice. Ye shall not respect persons in judgment, but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man for the judgment is God; and the cause that is too hard for thee, bring it to

me and I will hear it. Thou shalt not wrest judgment, thou shalt not respect persons. How long will ye judge unjustly, and except the persons of the wicked ; defend the poor and the fatherless, do justice to the afflicted and needy, deliver the poor and needy, rid them out of the hand o the wicked.

Here are but a few bible passages—please read the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah, and the second and third verses in particular. Please read the second chapter of the epistle of James. We may delight in the service of God, and have much animal love, but what will it avail us if we love not our neighbor as ourselves.

MANAGEMENT OF THE INSANE, &c.

In Dr. Woodward's report relating to the State Lunatic Asylum, occurs the following interesting passage :

Of the one thousand and thirty four patients who have been in the Hospital since it was first occupied, there have not been twenty who have not taken their food at the table with others more or less of the time ; of these twenty, more than three-fourths were so ill and feeble when they arrived at the hospital, as to be unable to do so, and died without amendment in a few days. While this sheet is being written, we have not a solitary individual who has not for a ver y considerable time taken food with others, with knives and forks. No injury has ever been done by allowing the patients all the means of comfortably taking their meals.

The difference between eating food in solitude from a tin or wooden dish with the fingers or a spoon, and going to a neatly furnished table, and taking their meals from crockery with a knife and fork, is the difference between a savage and civilized man, of a brute and a human being.

No one thing contributes more to awaken self-respect, and restrain the furiously insane, than this indulgence at table, and the confidence which he feels is placed in him by those who have him in keeping. The same is true in respect to dress and the treatment he receives from those whom he looks upon as superiors and whom he feels bound to obey. If he is neatly and comfortably clad like those whom he meets, he feels that he is as good as others, respects himself as they appear to respect him, and is careful to do nothing by which he shall 'lose caste.' If his

garments are tattered or dirty, he will tear them off or soil them more; if neat and tidy, he will preserve them with care, and even feel proud of them.

Within a few days, a patient was brought to the Hospital, who had been confined three years in a cage: he had not used knife or fork to take his meals during this period, and had not felt the influence of a fire for two winters.—The gentleman who brought him to our care manifested praiseworthy benevolence in his efforts to ameliorate his condition, and get him into more comfortable winter quarters, and hoped that in a few months we should be able to improve his state, and that he would observe the decencies of life, and take his food in a proper manner; while he remained conversing respecting him, the patient was quietly seated at the table taking his supper with his knife and fork in his hand! On the second Sabbath from his admission, he attended the chapel quietly, and gave it as his unqualified opinion that he was 'well off.'

Another man came into the Hospital quite recently, furious as a wild beast, noisy, violent, and outrageous; he was placed in a solitary room with wristbands upon his arms to save his clothes and keep them on. For many days in succession he tore his clothes and stripped himself constantly. A few days ago I found him in a state of perfect nudity. I proposed to him to be dressed and go into the gallery: he promised he would be quiet and tear no more clothing: upon his pledge he went in—he has been quiet, has kept his clothes upon him, takes his food at the table with others, and is quite civil, in a state of entire contrast to what he had been before.

If, in our daily intercourse with the insane we should treat them as inferiors, or pass them by without notice or attention, refuse to hear them, and evince towards them a feeling of superiority, we should find them in a constant state of irritation and excitement. If we treat them kindly and politely, inquire after their welfare, and hear patiently their story, we awaken in them a spirit of mildness and affection, we can control them without severity, and gain their confidence and esteem.

If there is any secret in the management of the insane, it is this; respect them, and they will respect themselves; treat them as reasonable beings, and they will take every possible pains to show you that they are such: give them your confidence, and they will rightly appreciate it, and rarely abuse it.

Miss Dorothea L. Dix of Boston, has devoted much time to the ascertainment of facts, respecting the treatment of insane persons in Massachusetts. The result of her observations has been presented to the legislature in a memorial. The memorial presents a shocking detail of the barbarities which are practised upon those whose lamp of reason is put out, that is almost incredible. The following are extracts from the memorial :—

'Fitchburgh. In November, visited the alms-house—inquired the number of insane—was answered, several; but two in close confinement; one idiotic subject. Saw one insane person in a dreary, neglected apartment, unemployed, and alone. Idleness and solitude weaken it is said the sane mind, much more must it hasten the downfall of that which is already trembling at the foundations. From this apartment I was conducted to an out-building, a portion of which was enclosed, so as to unite shelter, confinement and solitude. The first space was a sort of entry, in which was a window; beyond, a close partition with doors, indicated where was the insane man I had wished to see. He had been returned from the hospital as incurable. I asked if he was violent or dangerous? ‘No.’ Is he clothed? ‘Yes.’ Why keep him shut up in this close confinement? ‘O, my husband is afraid he’ll get to Worcester, and then *the town will have money to pay.*’—‘He must come out—I wish to see him.’ The open door disclosed a squalid place, dark, and *furnished* with straw. The crazy man raised himself slowly from the floor upon which he was crouched; and with unsteady step came towards me. His look was feeble and sad, but calm and gentle.

‘Give me those books, oh, give me those books!’ and with trembling eagerness he reached for some books I carried in my hand. ‘Do give them to me, I want them,’ said he, with kindling earnestness. You could not use them, friend; you canot see here. ‘O, give them to me, do;’ and he raised his hand, and bent a little forward, lowering his voice—‘*I’ll pick a little hole in the plank, and let in some of God’s light.*’

The master came round. ‘Why cannot you take this man abroad to work on the farm? he is harmless; air and exercise will help to recover him.’ The answer was in substance the same as that first given; but he added, ‘I’ve been talking with our overseers, and I’ve proposed getting from the blacksmith an iron collar and chain; then I can have him out by the house.’ An iron collar and chain! ‘Yes; I had a cousin up in Vermont, crazy as a wildcat, and I got a collar made for him, *and he liked it.*’ Liked it! how did he manifest his pleasure? ‘Why, he

left off trying to run away. I kept the alms-house at Groton ; there was a man there, from the hospital ; I built an out-house for him, and the blacksmith made him an iron collar and chain ; so we made him fast ; and the overseers approved it, and—' I here interrupted him. I have seen that poor creature at Groton, in his doubly iron bondage ; and you must allow me to say, that as I understand you remain but one year in the same place, and you may find insane subjects in all, I am confident if overseers permit such a multiplication of collars and chains, the public will not long sanction such barbarities ; but if you had at Groton any argument for this measure in the violent state of the unfortunate subject, how can you justify such treatment of a person quiet, and not dangerous, as is this poor man ? I beg you to forbear the chains, and treat him as you yourself would like to be treated were you in like fallen circumstances.

Newburyport. Visited the alms-house in June last ; eighty inmates ; seven insane ; one idiotic. Commodious and neat house ; several of the partially insane apparently very comfortable ; two very improperly situated—namely, an insane man, not considered incurable, in an out-building, whose room opened upon what is called 'the dead-room ;' affording, in lieu of companionship with the living, a contemplation of corpses ! The other subject was a woman in a *cellar*. I desired to see her ; much reluctance was shown. I pressed the request ; the master of the house stated that she was *in the cellar* ; that she was *dangerous to be approached* ; that 'she had lately attacked his wife ;' and *was often naked*. I persisted : ' If you will not go with me, give me the keys, and I will go alone.' Thus importuned, the outer doors were opened. I descended the stairs from within : a strange, unnatural noise seemed to proceed from beneath our feet ; at the moment I did not much regard it. My conductor proceeded to remove a padlock, while my eye explored the wide space in quest of the poor woman. All for a moment was still. But judge my horror and amazement, when a door to a closet *beneath the staircase* was opened, revealing, in the imperfect light, a female apparently wasted to a skeleton, partially wrapped in blankets, furnished for the narrow bed on which she was sitting ; her countenance furrowed, not by age but suffering, was the image of distress. In that contracted place, unlighted, unventilated, she poured forth the wailings of despair ; mournfully she extended her arms, and appealed

to me, ‘ Why am I consigned to hell ?—dark—dark—I used to pray ; I used to read the bible—I have done no crime in my heart ; I had friends—why have all forsaken me !—my God ! my God ! why hast *thou* forsaken me ; ’ Those groans, those wailings, come up daily, mingling, with how many others, a perpetual and sad memorial. When the good Lord shall require an account of our stewardship, what shall all and each answer.

Perhaps it will be inquired how long, how many days or hours was she imprisoned in those confined limits ? *For years !* In another part of the cellar were other small closets, only better, because higher through the entire length, into one of which she by turns was transferred, so as to afford opportunity for fresh whitewashing, &c.

Some may say these things cannot be remedied ; these furious maniacs are not to be raised from these base conditions. *I know* they are ! could give *many* examples ; let one suffice. A young woman, a pauper, in a distant town, *Sandisfield*, was for years a raging maniac. A cage, chains, and a whip, were the agents for controlling her, united with harsh tones and profane language. Annually, with others, (the town’s poor,) she was put up at auction, and bid off at the lowest price which was declared for her. One year, not long past, an old man came forward in the number of applicants for the poor wretch ; he was taunted and ridiculed. ‘ What would he and his old friend do with such a mere beast ? ’ ‘ My wife says yes,’ replied he ; ‘ and I shall take her.’ She was given to his charge ; he conveyed her home ; she was washed, neatly dressed, and placed in a decent bed-room, furnished for comfort, and opening into the kitchen. How altered her condition !—As yet the *chains* were not off. The first week she was somewhat restless, at times violent ; but the quiet, kind ways of the old people, wrought a change ; she received her food decently, forsook acts of violence, and no longer uttered blasphemous or indecent language ; after a week, the chain was lengthened, and she was received as a companion into the kitchen. Soon she engaged in trivial employment. ‘ After a fortnight,’ said the old man, ‘ I knocked off the chains, and made her a free woman.’ She is at times excited, but not violently ; they are careful of her diet ; they keep her very clean ; she calls them ‘ father’ and ‘ mother.’ Go there now, and you will find her ‘ clothed,’ and though not perfectly in her ‘ right mind,’ so far restored as to be a safe and comfortable inmate.’